

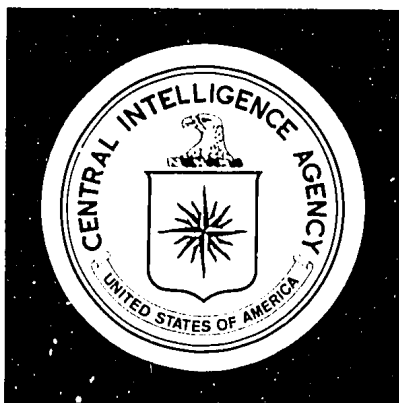
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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

WEEKLY SUMMARY

Special Report

CIA

Force Reductions in Europe

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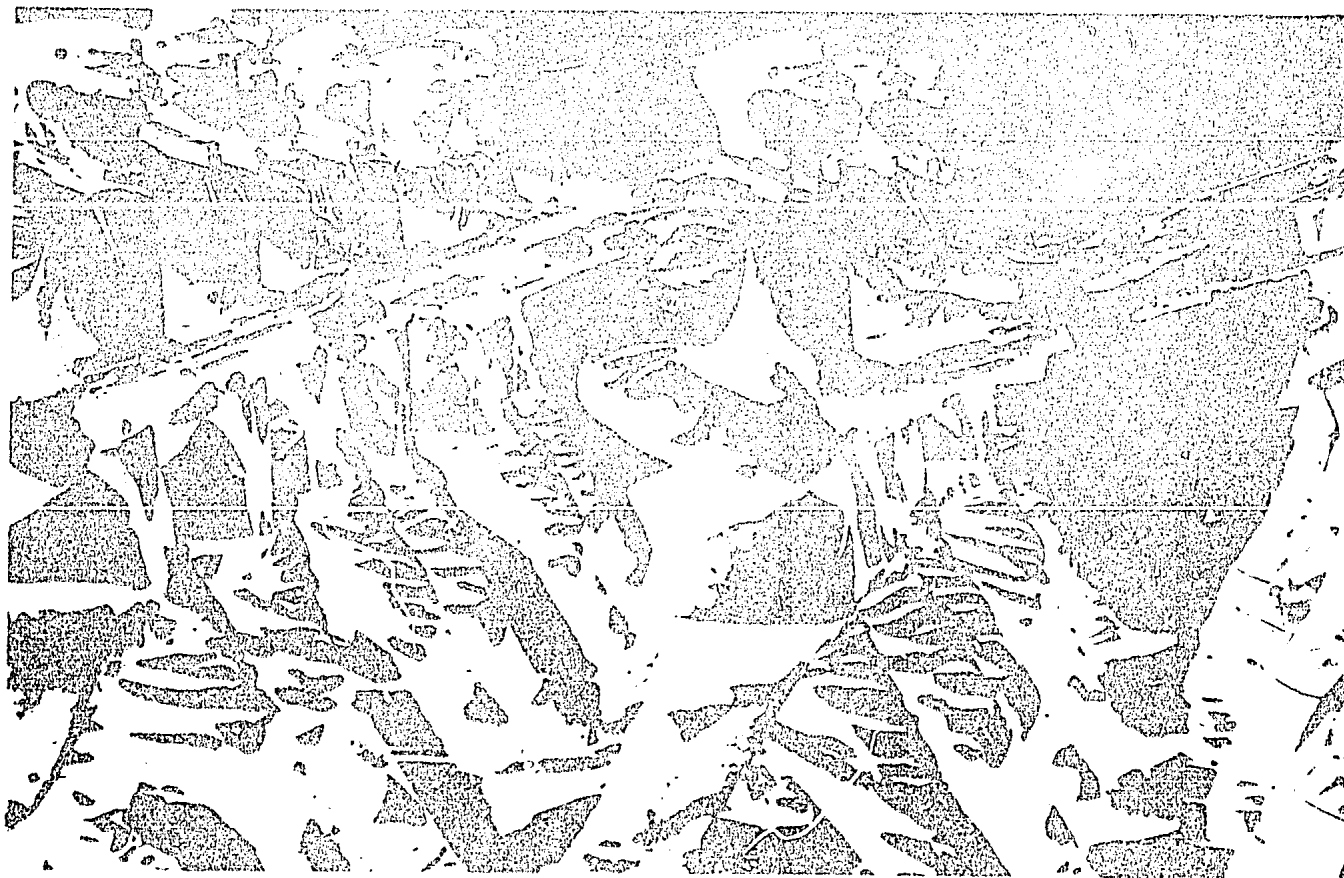
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FORCE REDUCTIONS IN EUROPE



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On 31 January, delegations from NATO and Warsaw Pact nations met in Vienna to begin what promises to be a lengthy and complex process of negotiating mutual force reductions in Europe. The initial talks will deal primarily with the agenda and procedures for the negotiations—scheduled to begin next fall. The eleventh-hour flurry of diplomatic activity, which at first appeared to threaten the talks, changed the anticipated site and raised questions about who would participate. It did not change the objectives of the participants on either side, and in the end, reflected the determination of both East and West to get the show on the road.

Promoted by the West for over four years, in part as a response to Soviet calls for a European security conference, the force reduction talks are a gamble for all concerned. Along with preparations for the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, West German Ostpolitik, the Berlin accords, and the SALT talks, the force reduction talks offer an opportunity to expand East-West detente. At the same time, they will test the capacity of the Western allies to hold together while negotiating vital security matters with the East. The approach of the preparatory talks revealed a potential for serious misunderstandings between the US and its allies over the role of the alliance and what the initial bargaining should achieve. For the East, the talks are a unique venture into what is essentially a bloc-to-bloc negotiation. As such, it could be a serious test of the Warsaw Pact's own flexibility and cohesion.

The Road to Negotiations

Moscow once held the initiative on force reduction proposals. The Soviets promoted troop cuts in Europe as a diplomatic tactic in the 1950s. By 1965, however, they had dropped the issue, partly because they hoped for unilateral US reductions and partly because they feared an accusation, particularly from the Chinese, that an agreement would enable the US to shift troops to Vietnam.

NATO picked up the idea in 1967 when the Western allies decided to use the alliance to

promote East-West detente. In that year, the allies approved the Harmel Report, which recommended that NATO work toward a "just and lasting peace" in Europe. Tactically, the invitation to the East to talk about mutual and balanced force reductions was first formally issued in June 1968 in response to Soviet proposals for a European security conference.

Moscow did not reply to the NATO invitation and the security conference campaign was temporarily subordinated to Soviet preoccupation with Czechoslovakia. In at least one respect, Moscow's apparent indifference was advantageous. Even at this early date, some allies had misgivings about the whole idea, but these doubts did not surface so long as the Soviets were silent.

The Western allies—with the exception of France—repeated the invitation twice in 1969, and the NATO staff began work on various force reduction schemes. These were intended to serve as a basis for NATO consideration of whether an approach that would preserve allied security would also be negotiable. The exercise revealed how difficult it might be to harmonize these requirements, and it made the allies even more aware of the problems they would encounter if the Soviets took up the NATO invitation.

Meeting in Rome in May 1970, the NATO foreign ministers reiterated their interest in exploratory talks on force reductions, but they laid down four basic considerations. Known as the Rome Criteria, the four points became the basis for public exposition of NATO's position. They papered over deep differences within the alliance and no longer reflect the positions of all the allies.

The next month, the Warsaw Pact responded to the NATO invitation, indicating an interest in a dialogue on force reductions. Moscow and its allies, however, carefully linked any such talks to the Soviet proposal for a security conference and specified that they should be concerned with "reducing foreign armed forces on the territory of European states."

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This response was viewed with skepticism in NATO. Many allies suspected that it mainly reflected Moscow's concern for its international image, and the tie-in with a security conference led them to question whether the Soviets were serious. The allies, nevertheless, concluded that they could not afford to treat the offer lightly. In December 1970, they announced a readiness to explore the possibility of reductions in stationed (i.e., foreign) forces if the reductions were "part of an integral program for the reduction of both stationed and indigenous forces."

The issue lay dormant until Brezhnev raised the subject of troop limitations in "Central Europe" as part of the "peace plan" he unveiled at the 24th Party Congress in March 1971. This renewal of Soviet interest caught the allies off guard. Many of them still saw the proposals as a useful tactical device to fend off pressures for unilateral US troop cuts. They had neither fully appraised the potential risks and advantages of force reductions nor developed any firm ideas on how the cuts could be accomplished. The European allies were also perceptibly disturbed by the specter of a bilateral dialogue on troop cuts between Washington and Moscow.

At least in part to buy time and to ward off direct US-Soviet dealings, NATO agreed in October 1971 to ask former secretary general Brosio to explore Soviet views. The Soviets, however, failed to invite Brosio to Moscow, and by the spring of 1972, most of the allies recognized that the gambit had failed. Despite their concern about the bilateral avenue, they reluctantly accepted the idea that President Nixon's then-pending meeting with Brezhnev would offer an opportunity to find out how the Soviets proposed to move the subject off dead center.

This in fact proved to be the case. While the President was in Moscow, the Soviets hoped to get a US commitment to begin preparations for a conference on security and cooperation in Europe. The Berlin agreement was ready for signature, thus removing the explicit pre-condition that NATO had posed for the beginning of conference preparations. In return for a US pledge to

DELEGATIONS OPENING TALKS

West

United States
Canada
Great Britain
West Germany
The Netherlands
Belgium
Luxembourg

East

Soviet Union
East Germany
Poland
Czechoslovakia
Hungary

Norway*
Denmark*
Italy*
Greece*
Turkey*

Romania*
Bulgaria*

** These states, without forces or territory in the reduction zone desired by the West, may revert to observer status.*

begin these preparatory talks, Moscow agreed that force reduction talks could begin as well.

Last September, when Dr. Kissinger followed up the summit with another trip to Moscow, the Soviets suggested a schedule for both security conference preparations and force reduction talks. They proposed that preparations for a security conference begin in November 1972, with the conference itself opening in June 1973; initial force reduction talks would open in January 1973 with negotiations starting in September or October 1973. The Soviets specified that the initial force reduction talks should deal only with the agenda and procedures for the talks themselves.

The NATO allies subsequently invited the Soviet Union, Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary to meet in Geneva for a preparatory conference substantially along the lines Moscow had proposed. The pact states did not respond immediately, apparently in part

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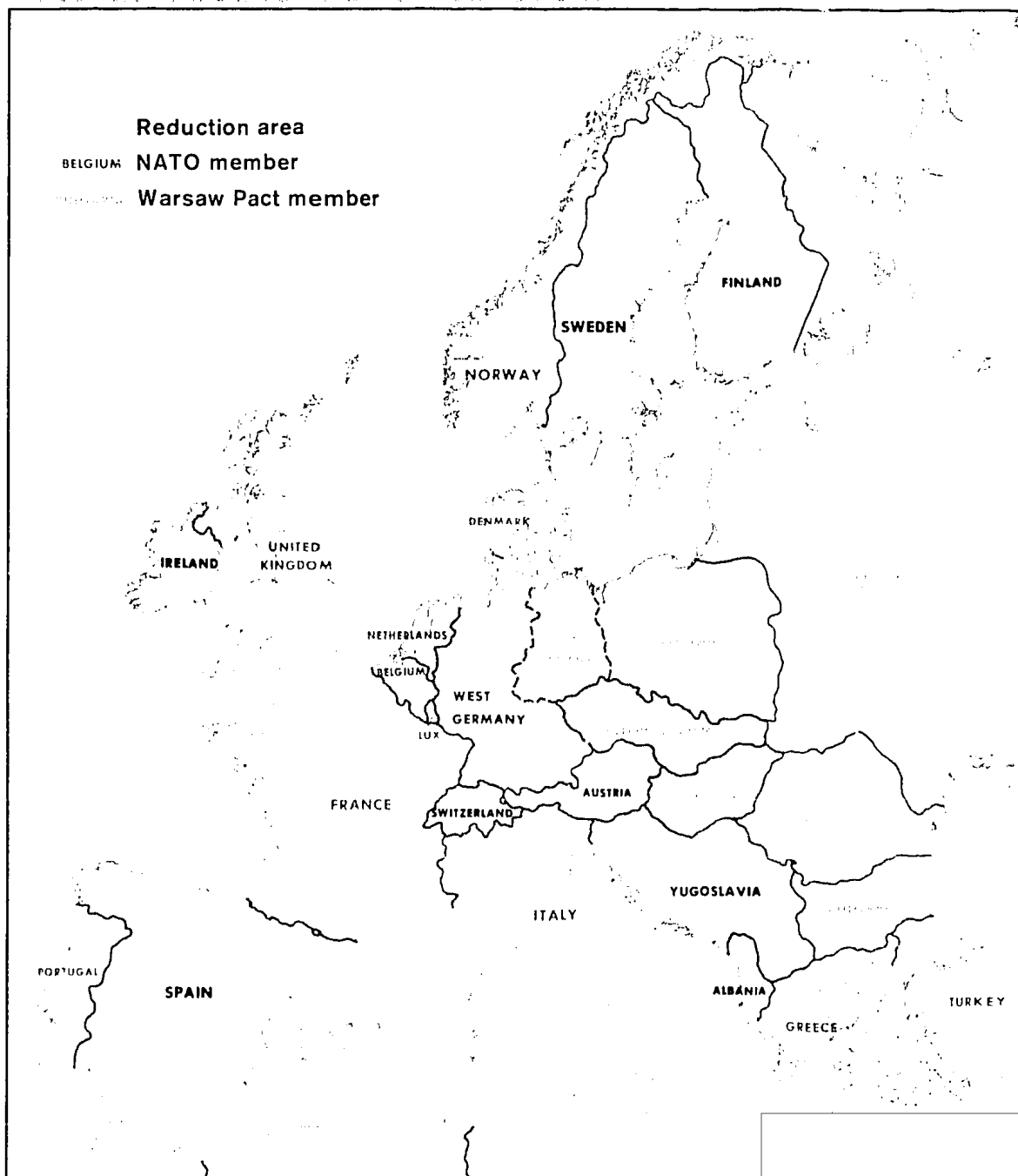
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Potential Area for Future Reduction



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because of Romanian insistence that it and all other interested states participate in the talks.

The Romanian position was accommodated in a reply approved by the Warsaw Pact foreign ministers in Moscow on 15-16 January. The reply, although essentially positive, set off a flurry of diplomatic activity that indicated how complex these negotiations will be. The East agreed that the talks could begin on 31 January, but suggested that they be held in Vienna and be open to "all interested states" in Europe plus the United States and Canada.

Most of the NATO allies thought that Moscow should be held to its agreement to open the talks on 31 January, but felt strongly that the initial Western response should stick with Geneva and against broadening participation. They were suspicious that the Soviet proposals were intended to undermine the negotiations. The Western reply that emerged from very difficult NATO consultations reiterated a preference for Geneva but did not rule Vienna out. The allies suggested that participation could be discussed during the initial talks, but advised against accepting the Soviet suggestion about "all interested states."

The Pact states, in turn, said that they would show up in Vienna and that Romania and Bulgaria—not included in the original Western invitation—would be coming. Moscow did not press its suggestion that "all interested states," including neutrals, be invited. The Soviets reserved the right to raise the matter later, reiterating their position that neutrals who so desire should eventually participate. The West accepted this modus vivendi in order to get the talks started.

Moscow's Position

While the Warsaw Pact replies accorded with Romania's position and reflected Soviet sensitivity to Bucharest's arguments that force reduction talks should not be on a bloc-to-bloc basis, several additional factors probably influenced the proposal for broader participation. It is doubtful that it was intended to renege on the commitment to begin talks on 31 January. Annoyed by the slow pace of security conference preparations,

however, the Soviets may have hoped to delay force reduction talks so that they would not get ahead of the discussions in Helsinki. Moscow's desire to offer wider talks on force reductions as a substitute for a prolonged debate over military matters at the security conference preparatory talks may also have been a consideration. Such a debate could jeopardize Moscow's hope for an early conclusion in Helsinki. Moscow probably also calculated that the response would score points with the neutrals and with the French, whose participation they particularly hope to encourage.

In their notes and subsequent comments, the Warsaw Pact representatives drew a clear distinction between participation in the preliminary talks and in the actual negotiations. They suggested that preliminary talks with broad participation would provide an umbrella under which regional groups could negotiate reductions in specific areas. This approach is in line with recent Romanian statements that they want no part, even as an observer, in negotiations on force reductions in Central Europe. They do want to be included in any wider forum that provides a framework for regional negotiations and in any group formed to discuss reductions in the Balkans. Their position has overtones of a Soviet-Romanian understanding, although there is no evidence that a formal agreement has been reached. Such an understanding would have elements pleasing to both Bucharest and Moscow. The Romanians would be included in the broad forum that would endorse force reductions and improve chances of holding the Balkan conference they have long sought. The Soviets would be free to conduct negotiations on Central Europe without the threat of Romanian interference.

Moscow's real attitude toward force reductions as such may not emerge until well after the actual negotiations are under way. Its periodic positive references and its eventual agreement to discuss reductions were probably intended primarily to persuade the West to begin preparations for the security conference.

On one hand, talks on force reduction may have some real attractions for Moscow. They

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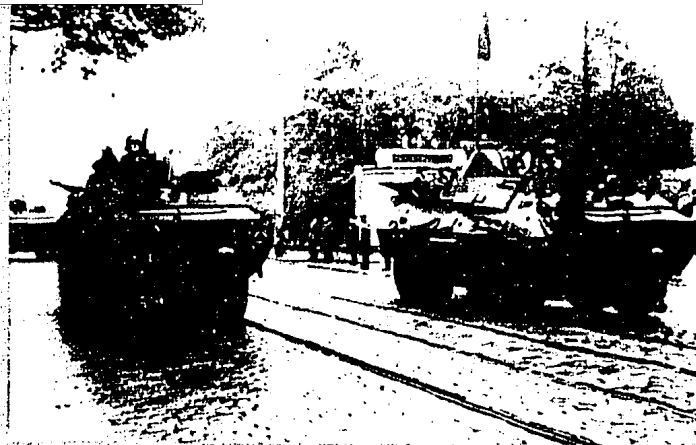
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WARSAW PACT FORCES



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complement the detente policy Brezhnev has espoused. Negotiations leading to reductions could also relieve pressure on Moscow's western flank at a time when relations with Peking remain severely strained. The Soviets may believe that negotiations will weaken NATO and even contribute to its disarray. On the other hand, the talks entail certain risks. In particular, there is the danger that reductions, or even negotiations on them, will loosen the Soviet hold on Eastern Europe. There is also a possibility that unilateral US troop withdrawals, which might have occurred if the Soviets had only waited, will now become conditional on Soviet withdrawals.

While the Soviets acknowledge that they have studied force reductions, they have done considerably less homework than has been done in the West. This, in addition to the skepticism of some Soviet officials, may account for Moscow's desire to limit the initial talks to agenda and procedural matters. The security conference preparatory talks have shown, however, that it is difficult to discuss agendas without getting into substance.

Most Soviet statements on force reductions have been couched in generalities. The one Soviet scholar who has dealt with the subject in depth has stressed its complexity, thus implying that only a simple approach can succeed. In particular, he considers it virtually impossible to work out a "mixed package"—i.e., an agreement weighing tanks against aircraft. The Soviets also reject any inference that they enjoy over-all superiority to the NATO forces and for this reason strongly oppose the Western concept of "balance." They are, therefore, likely to prefer only small percentage reductions—possibly beginning with US and Soviet forces—and verification by national means.

Except for Romania, the East European countries have not recently expressed independent views. They are presumably interested in some mutual force reductions, but have no wish to get out ahead of Moscow. Although they may differ with the Soviets on certain aspects of force reductions, it is unlikely that these differences will emerge during the initial talks.

The NATO Hassle...

The NATO consultations of the last three months have underlined the importance the allies attach to the forthcoming negotiations and have demonstrated their intention jealously to protect their political and military interests. Since Dr. Kissinger's trip to Moscow, they have become even more nervous about what they see as growing US-Soviet control of the negotiations. They have maneuvered to reassert their influence, and, as if to insulate themselves from perceived ill-effects of the negotiations, they have urged a cautious approach.

...On Procedures

The way in which any reductions are negotiated is vitally important to the allies, who think that the process itself could either cement or crack the bonds that hold NATO together. Almost all believe that their interests are at stake, and the smaller states, in particular, have fought to ensure that the bargaining process remains an alliance affair.

One of the initial skirmishes was fought over who should participate directly in the negotiations. The US preferred that only those Western allies whose forces or territory are involved be represented—the US, UK, Canada, West Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg. (France will be included if Paris decides to participate.) The three states on the southern flank—Italy, Greece, and Turkey—felt strongly that they also had a direct interest. Although they have argued that Soviet forces withdrawn from Central Europe might be deployed to the flanks, their basic concern was that they not be on the outside looking in on negotiations of general importance to Western security.

Most of the other allies sympathized with these concerns, and a delicate compromise was reached last October. The Western negotiating team would include two representatives of the NATO flanks: one slot rotating among Italy, Greece, and Turkey; the other shared by Denmark and Norway. The observer countries would

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have the right to speak, but only by invitation and only on issues that directly affect them. Broadening the talks in the way suggested by Moscow would undo this agreement, since the flank allies would want a role equal to that of any other state that does not have territory or forces involved.

At the time, solution of the participation problem in NATO helped to cool a related dispute over the connection between force reduction talks and the conference on security and cooperation. The US—as well as the Soviet Union and France—wanted to keep the two negotiations completely separate, believing the security conference too unwieldy a forum for discussing the complicated issue of force reductions. A number of smaller allies, led by the Belgians, wanted to link the two and suggested a variety of possible ways to do so. These included proposals to set up a committee subordinate to the security conference to consider force reductions or to have the conference itself negotiate force reduction principles or stringent constraints on troop movements and dispositions.

The preference among the smaller allies for a strong linkage was inspired by a number of considerations. They argued that a "security" conference should have something to do with military security. They also thought that a tie to a conference Moscow obviously wants to succeed would give the West some leverage on one about which Moscow did not seem enthusiastic. Most important, they saw linkage as another way of influencing the conduct and outcome of force reduction talks.

When the US agreed to participation by the flank states, much of the earlier interest in linkage dissipated. The Soviet proposal to open force reduction talks to all interested states has had the unintended effect of increasing support for dealing with broad military issues at the security conference. Most neutral and nonaligned states now think that any general discussion of force reduction issues might as well take place at the security conference while actual troop cuts are negotiated in a separate forum. A number of the smaller NATO allies agree.

Canada and the European allies, supported by Secretary General Luns and the NATO international staff, have fought long and hard for maximum formal alliance control over the negotiations. The debate has focused principally on the respective roles of the North Atlantic Council—the normal forum for NATO political consultations—and of the ad hoc group to be established at the negotiating site. Luns suggested that the council "consult and decide on all essential questions" for the talks and that the ad hoc group provide day-to-day coordination of Western positions agreed by the council.

The US countered with suggestions that a number of allies strongly opposed on the grounds that the suggestions would too narrowly limit the roles of both the council and the ad hoc group. The smaller allies were particularly upset. Although the British and West Germans supported the arguments of the smaller states, they also tried to increase their direct influence on US decisions by suggesting that Washington, London, and Bonn carefully coordinate their positions on force reductions prior to council consideration.

For the moment, this question has been submerged in terminology that in effect allows both the US and the allies to follow their own preferences once talks begin. The allies will continue in any case to urge that they have every opportunity to preview and criticize US positions for the initial talks or for the negotiations themselves.

Prior to Dr. Kissinger's trip to Moscow, the allies had assumed that initial force reduction talks would be sufficiently substantive to determine whether full-blown negotiations might succeed. The schedule Moscow suggested to Dr. Kissinger would have the security conference and force reduction talks follow in sequence rather than parallel as the allies had desired. The allies were willing to swallow this as long as the initial talks would explore some of the real issues. Moscow, however, stipulated that the initial force reduction talks cover only agenda and procedures, and US acquiescence heightened allied concerns about US-Soviet bilateralism.

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The US has since maintained that consideration of substantive matters in the initial talks might jeopardize Moscow's commitment to begin negotiations next fall, but a number of the allies have remained unconvinced. Early last December a few of them urged on pressing NATO to update the mandate prepared for the abortive Brosio mission. Although neither London nor Bonn were very sympathetic to the US case, they accepted that there was not enough time to prepare elaborate allied negotiating positions before the talks opened. As an alternative, they jointly drafted a confidential "guidelines" paper and presented it to NATO. The paper, as it emerged from difficult coordination in NATO, avoids setting substantive preconditions that the Eastern side would have to accept before the negotiations could begin. Allied endeavors to reintroduce more substance into the Western position are likely to continue.

Both the UK and West Germany have supported the view that during the initial talks individual allies should be able to raise various force reduction principles and elicit Soviet reactions. The British even said that they would not feel bound to limit their remarks during the talks to minimal NATO positions and would reserve the right to express, for example, their preference for a cautiously phased, integral approach to reductions. The allies accept the need for as few divergences as possible in their presentations at the talks, but some divergences appear inevitable.

...On Substance

Although the allies are still far from agreement on how an acceptable troop reduction accord with the East might look, a consensus is emerging on at least two features. Most of the allies would prefer a phased, integral program. This would mean a lengthy timetable, with "principles" negotiated first, followed by agreement on collateral constraints, such as exchanges of observers and advance notification of troop movements. Actual reductions would come only at the end of this process.

The phasing idea, the brainchild of the West Germans, has now been accepted by most of the

allies. The British have defended the concept as fervently as if it were their own, because its inherent caution very well suits their skepticism about the wisdom of any Western reductions.

The allies think the phased approach has several virtues. They see initial negotiation of principles and constraints as a way to test Soviet intentions before any troop cuts are made. The West Europeans also assign a higher priority to constraints than does the US. They think that such measures in and of themselves would provide more security at a lesser cost than would actual force reductions. Negotiation of constraints before reductions, they feel, would give them a role in the verification of any reduction accord. They also see the phased approach as a way of delaying the cuts for as long as five years, which would give Western Europe time to consider the actions that may be required to offset US force withdrawals.

A consensus seems to be developing among the major allies in favor of limiting initial reductions to US and Soviet forces—a preference the US shares. This inclination first began to emerge at last month's NATO ministerial meetings when French Foreign Minister Schumann—departing from France's usual detached opposition to reductions in any form—stated that cuts confined to US and Soviet forces might be compatible with Western security. Italian Foreign Minister Medici agreed. The British and Canadians also prefer this approach. Although West Germany has in the past insisted on the inclusion of indigenous forces—and the Defense Ministry in Bonn still prefers it—foreign office officials have been trying to convince Chancellor Brandt to change this position.

This trend suggests that the larger allies are beginning to think more seriously about how to meet their own longer term defense needs. All face domestic pressures to reduce defense spending and, until recently, many have wanted to share in any force reductions. US-Soviet detente and the enlargement of the European Communities, however, are forcing them to look farther into the future. Now that force reduction talks

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"Personally, I think and believe that it is right, that armaments should be reduced a little, even if only a little. It would be good to reduce forces. That would signify confidence of one country in another. But it is not so simple. One cannot solve everything in an hour and then drink French cognac."

Brezhnev's comments to press in Minsk while awaiting arrival of French President Pompidou

are imminent, the allies appear more willing to live with lower levels of US conventional forces in Western Europe in return for reductions in Soviet forces in Eastern Europe. They do not want force reduction negotiations to encourage an epidemic of defense cuts among the smaller allies or to close future options for the organization of West European defenses.

The British, in particular, do not want to rule out the possibility of some sort of European defense force. Even the French, not known as supporters of European defense cooperation, have

now privately told the US that Schumann's comments last month reflected French concern that a European defense force may not be possible at present, but should not be precluded in the future. It remains to be seen whether in the long run all the allied governments will be willing or able to ignore popular pressures to share in the troop cuts.

Some Big Questions

French Participation. Although Paris remains officially disassociated from force reduction talks,

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it has clearly decided that it can no longer afford to remain totally aloof. Schumann's statement that reductions limited to US and Soviet forces might be the lesser evil has heightened speculation that France might be preparing for greater involvement. Pompidou's reaction to Brezhnev's invitation to participate buttresses this impression, suggesting that the Soviet leader's prodding had some effect. Paris may in fact consider joining the talks if there is a successful conclusion to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe—thereby satisfying the French condition that detente precede, not follow, troop cuts. Moscow may hope that broadening participation in the talks to include some neutrals might induce Paris to take part.

Nuclear Weapons. Whether nuclear weapons should be included in mutual force reductions remains a sensitive question. The allies fully expect the Soviets to continue to press in SALT for the reduction of US forward-based nuclear systems in Europe—short-range missiles, aircraft, and the nuclear weapons they carry. Most of the allies would prefer that these systems not be a topic for East-West negotiation at all.

There also are a number of views beyond this initial preference. The French, for example, say that they strongly prefer that any discussions of tactical nuclear weapons take place in SALT rather than in the force reduction talks. Some allies would countenance trade-offs of Western tactical nuclear weapons and their delivery systems for Warsaw Pact tanks or Soviet medium-range ballistic missiles aimed at Europe. The Dutch think that, if the Soviets propose to deal with tactical nuclear weapons in force reduction talks, the West should expand the area of reductions so that Soviet medium-range ballistic missiles in the western military districts of the Soviet Union are included.

The initial talks will steer clear of the nuclear nettle. It will, nevertheless, remain one of the more intriguing and controversial possibilities for the allies to consider when they resume preparations for the negotiations. It could, in fact, determine whether a mixed-package deal with the West will be possible. A number of allied spokesmen have already urged that NATO soon focus more closely on the nuclear question.

Outlook for the Initial Talks

The initial talks have opened accompanied by much confusion over who should participate. If the Soviet proposal to invite "all interested states" was designed to discourage linkage between force reduction talks and the security conference, pacify the Romanians, and encourage French participation, then it is not likely to be a major stumbling block. Bargaining would get much tougher, however, if the Soviets were to try to broaden the scope of negotiations beyond Central Europe to include the Balkans, the Mediterranean, or the northern flanks.

Although national variations may eventually surface among Warsaw Pact governments, the East—with the possible exception of Romania—will undoubtedly present a well-coordinated front. This will contrast with the already apparent independent Western views; the discrepancy between East and West could have the effect of encouraging the NATO allies to stick together. This will be difficult since the varying perspectives within NATO represent strongly held national positions and different approaches to force reductions. Nevertheless, having argued hard within NATO, the allies probably will be judicious in what they say to the Soviets during the initial talks. The allies will certainly advance some of their preferred approaches to mutual force reductions, but will not push hard. The British, for example, have backed off from their stated intention to advocate their own positions. They now imply that they will merely indicate their preference for a phased approach to reductions without going into excessive detail or argumentation.

The ability of the allies to remain reasonably unified when confronting the East in multilateral negotiations has already passed an important test in the first round of security conference talks in Helsinki. While most of the allies will hesitate to expose NATO's dirty linen to Moscow, they will continue to urge that mutual force reductions remain an affair of the whole alliance, and they will continue to insist that the US be willing to place its ideas before NATO prior to trying them out on the Soviets.

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